

Robin the Cobler 1079-6 10
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**WITCH of the Woodlands;
OR THE
COBLER's New Translation.**

Here Robin the Cobler for his former Evils,
Is punish'd bad as Faustus with his Devils.



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Here the old Witches dance, and then agree,
 How to fit Robin for his Lechery ;
 First he is made a Fox and hunted on,
 'Till he becomes an Horse, an Owl, a Swan.



At last their Spells of Witchcraft they withdrew.
 But Robin still more hardships must go through ;
 For e'er he is transform'd into a Man,
 They make him kiss their bums and glad he can.

T H E



THE
HISTORY
OF THE
Witch of the Woodlands.



C H A P. I.

Robin's Place of Abode, and his amorous Transactions; he is married to a wench with his pitiful Lamentation.

IN the Wilds of Kent, not far from Romney Marsh, there dwelt an old merry conceited Cocker, commonly called Robin the Devil, who afterwards was called the Witch of Woodlands.

This cocker always took special care to please his customers, but particularly he would be sure, if any comely wench had any thing to do, he would be sure to go through stitch with her work first of all.

He would be merry in all company, and sing in his shop like a nightingale

He would caper like Jack Pudding and was not inferior to Lully Lawrence, who got eighteen wenches with-child in one year.

But as the proverb says, The Pitcher which goes often to the Well may come home broke at last; and sweet Meat will have sour sauce. So it fared with Robin the Cocker, for one of the wenches being suddenly brought to-bed of a fine male child, the damsel's mother served him with a warrant, and made him marry her daughter. Then was poor Robin in a peck of troubles, and could not tell what to do; for though he was a stout follower of Mars, yet he was not made a Vulcan till that time; and now he must find milk candles, soap, a nurse, &c. but as the proverb says, That one ill chance generally followeth another, so it was with him; for two other damsels that he had formerly made use of, began to make use of him, and brought him two children to keep that were both born in one day; which when he beheld he fell into such a quandary, that the people that beheld him, said, he looked exceedingly pitiful on the matter, that they thought in their

minds that he never would be good any more.

Then he began with doleful words and wringing hands to bewail his former follies, saying, I wish that my father had never begot me, then I should not have got so many girls with-child, or else I wish some honest sow gelder had done his office ; then I had escaped the misery I am now certain to endure ! Oh ! silly rogue that I am, was it not sufficient for me to sing and dance, and drink ale and be merry with the girls, but that I must over-run all in my way : now I am in a worse case than Porrage John, Marriot the Lawyer, or even the Pinder of Wakefield.

While he was making this lamentation a companion of his whispered him in the ear, and bid him be gone, saying, One light pair of heels is worth two pair of hands. He took council, and went off, as you may find in the next chapter.



C H A P. II.

Robin runs away, and the Entertainment
he found on the Road.

ROBIN the Cobler takes this advice, made no more ado, but trust up his heels to be gone, resolving to go to London, and there work till such time as his children were men, and able to work for themselves. But as he travelled thro' the Wild of Kent, he lost his way in the Woodlands, and night being at hand, and finding none to guide him, he wandered up and down till ten o'clock in a cold dark, frosty night, but at last he heard a cock crow, and being somewhat comforted at this, he approached to the house, and rapping at the door there came out a very old woman with a dishclout about her head, and a staff in her hand, demanding of Robin what he wanted?—O dear mother, said he, I am a poor traveller, who have lost my way, and would be willing to give sixpence for a night's lodging.—Marry, quoth she, all the beds

in my house are not worth fixpence, for I have no more than I lie on myself. — But if you are willing you may lie with me.—Robin beholding and viewing her body all over, that she was long-tosed, blear-eyed, crook-necked, wry-mouthed, and cramp-shouldered, beetle-browed, thin belly'd, bow-legged, and splay-footed, he began to frame an excuse, saying, Good mother, I beg you would consider I am a batchelor, and never went to-bed to a woman in my life.—Wilt thou swear that to be true, said the old woman? Yes I will says Roger.—Whereupon he heard a voice, as from the top of the chimney, crying three several times Robin the Cocker is mine.

When he heard these words, he fell into such a trembling condition, his hands shook, his pulse beat, his heart went pit-a-pat, his head-ached, his nose dropped, and his belly grumbled; and also certain parcel of melting tears dropped from his breeches; and then falling on his knees to the old woman, he desired her to let him have a lodging how she would, or where she could. Then the old woman took him in, and with a remnant of wa-

ter, which she had kept in a chamber-pot for that purpose, she washed him from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet, and made him as white as if he had been washed in puppy-dog water: and so they went lovingly to-bed together.





CHAP. II.

Robin wakes in the Morning and misses his bed Fellow, who soon returns with some Witches. The Manner of his Punishment, and other Particulars.

AFTER Robin the Cobler had taken his first repose, he awaked, and turning himself, felt for his bed-fellow; but she was gone, and being alone, he began to ponder on his last night's odd passages, and how to make his escape before the old hag's return.

But as he was ruminating, in came the old woman, with three of her disciples, having each of them a torch in her hand crying out all at once; They would be revenged on Robin the Cobler for all his whoring tricks. These Witches could transform themselves into any shapes at pleasure. The old woman brought in a bear at her heels, another a wolf, a third a cat, and the other a large knife. Poor Robin, altho' the weather was cold, and the bed-cloaths but thin, was not enough

for being in a flinking fear, he covered himself over head and all, save one hole that was in the coverlid, which he peeped through, but durst not stir.—The old Witch put her hand under the bed, and took out a tabor and pipe, and played a tune that lasted till almost day, and the time the tabor played, the three Witches



danced the hay with their heels uppermost. Mean while Robin lay and besift himself, But as soon as the musick ceased the bear began to roar, and the wolf to howl for food,—Then the old witch said, I've in the house the bravest breakfast for your familiars, that they have had these many days; nay, ever since they devoured the two wicked whores that were bewitch;

ed as they rid in a coach towards a bawdy house in London.—And now since that Witches have power over none but cursers swearers, thieves, dissemblers, hypocrites, pimps, bawds, whores, and whorehunters let us make the best use of our time we can; and now you shall behold what a gallant prize I have got by chance.



There was a very merry disposed cobbler near Romney, who used to swagger, swear, and domineer, and said, He cared not a farthing for all the Witches alive; for if he said his prayers in the morning, they had no power over him.—But though he served God in the morning, he served the

Devil at night ; and would seduce the girls by his dissembling tongue, and forswearing himself, by which means he got three maids with-child in a night, making them believe he would marry them on the morrow ; but at last old Mother Webb forced him to marry her daughter. And the other girls brought him the children to keep. Now as he got them all with child in one night, so they brought him three children in one day. These things he imagined we did not know but my imp told me. But the archest piece of roguery he ever did, was to a widow-woman in the Isle of Thanet ; for he promised her marriage, and made her sell a little estate of twenty-four pounds, and said If she would lend him the money to buy leather, he would marry her upon the Monday following, and wished if he was not so good as his word, he might be tore in pieces by wolves and bears ; but yet he did not come back to the widow again. And last of all, he is run away from his wife and children, and now lies under the coverlid.

When the other three Witches heard this discovery, they immediately jumped

for joy ; and the three familiars seemed almost ready to tear the witches to pieces for breakfast. — Then said one of them to the rest since he wished he might be devoured by wolves and bears, he shall have his wish ; — and he shall presently be cut into quarters, and the wolf shall have his liver, heart, and lungs for breakfast ; the bear his paunch and bowels ; and the cat his private parts to gnaw on, — No, said the old Witch, it shall not be so ; for he shall not have so easy a death. This gave him some comfort, for he had much rather live a languishing life than to die a sudden death.

To be brief, they grew more outrageous, took off the bed-cloaths and made him stand up as naked as he was born. — The wolf bit him by the throat, the bear by the bum, and the cat by the members. Now said the old witch we have marked you for our own. — They passed sentence upon him : — That he should have three days punishment for his past offences, and after that be eaten up alive. — The first of the three days he was to be transformed into the shape of a fox, and be chased from morning until night ; on the second he

was to be a riding Nag, to carry them any where ; the third he was to be an Owl, and fly about all day long. So having agreed, as soon as day-light appeared, they turned out Robin the Cocker in the shape of a Fox ; and having



transform'd themselves into the shapes of dogs, followed close at his heels ; and so every time they overtook him, they bit him by the buttocks, and knipt him devilishly, for they had no mercy in their teeth. The next day he was transformed into the shape of a Horse, and then the witches got upon his back, all four at once, and rid over hills and mountains, through rivers and ponds, and which was worst of all, they rode him through such

a number of bushes, brambles, and briars, that they tore the skin from his flesh, in-
 somuch that his whoring blood run from
 him in great quantities.—The third day
 they made him an owl ; who flying up
 and down from tree to tree at noon day,
 crying Whoo, whoo, whoo, all the birds



came most strangely in flocks, to see
 an owl flying about at noon day, where-
 fore to fulfil the old proverb, they all fell
 upon him, Like Pies upon an owl ; and
 to be brief, they plucked his feathers,
 broke one of his wings, and pecked out
 one of his eyes: This done, the grand
 Witch consulting with the rest of the
 Witches, said, Robin the Cobler had done

pennance enough in any one's conscience for all his wenching tricks; and therefore thought it proper to turn him next into a Swan.

At last they withdrew all their enchantments and spells, and then Robin the Cobbler soon became a man again. But before they would give him leave to depart, they made him kneel down and kiss every one of their fleshly parts, and then by consent they let him go.





C H A P. IV.

Robin goes to London, with his bitter
Lamentation on the Road.

NOW when Robin the Cobler was delivered from the enchantments, his senses were all restored, but he looked like one of Pharaoh's lean kine, his visage was ghastly, and his nose kicked like that of an old scolding alewife ; nor had he any habit worth picking off a dunghill ; only an old lousy shirt, and a pair of slip-shoes, which one of the old witches had given him out of meer kindness ; but he knew himself to be in a far better taking than he was before, when he was ridden by four she-devils at once. Then began poor Roger to ruminate and think with himself what course he had best to take, and he resolved once more to bend his journey towards the famous city of London and try if fortune afforded him any better luck than he had before ; but still he vowed to keep upon the road, and never presume to go through the Wood-

lands any more, for fear that any of the Witches should meet him again.

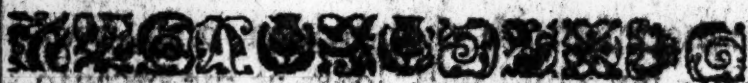
Now as he passed along the road, in every village and town where he came, the boys and girls all of them ran away from him, thinking he was mad, inso-much that there was not an idle boy or girl in the streets, but were frighted at him. But here comes on the bit crest of all ; for poor Robin having gone on his journey for the space of three days and two nights, without meat, or money to buy any ; which made him begin to lament his sorrowful condition in the following manner : O unfortunate Cobler as I am ! now I am in a worse condition than I was before ; for when I was a Horse the Witches rode me, and put me to much pain, nevertheless they gave me something to feed on at night, though it was but bran and water. When I was a Fox, though the Witches in the shapes of Dogs run after me, and bit me sorely by the buttocks, yet I had something to eat ; but now I am hunger bitten, which is ten times worse. When I was an Owl I was most shamefully used, but now I am a wondering stock unto all the folks that

see me, inſomuch that neither man, woman, nor child will look at me becauſe of the poverty of my fleſh, and the diſguiſe of my wretched habit. O what a ſad deplorable creature am I. O that poor Robin the Cobler, like Diogene's



mare could feed upon brambles and coarſe thistles; or like the Camelion feed upon air.

C H A P.



C A A P. V.

Robin meets an old Blind Beggar.

NOW whilst he was thus complain-
ing, comes by a blind beggar-man
having a very large wallet, full of the frag-
ments of meat, with good bread and
cheese, that had been given him among



his generous benefactors ; upon which,
as soon as the other had fixed his eyes on
the old man's wallet, he was extremely
glad, and his heart jumped for Joy, as
hoping he should now fill his belly once
again. And so taking courage, he ad-
dressed the old man, being well assured

he could not see him.—Well overtaken, father, how far walk you this way?—

Marry, quoth the beggar, but to the next village, and through the want of a guide, I am afraid that I shall come very late to my home.—Why, says the Cobler, I will lead you myself, for I love old men with all my heart.



CHAP.



C H A P. VI.

Robin lives with a Beggar, who dies and leaves him all his Money. Robin goes Home, and what Use he makes of his good Fortune.

AS Robin the Cobler was leading the blind man, the old gentleman found him extremely diligent, and doubly circumspect, and thereupon desired to know who he might be, that would undervalue himself so much, as to take the pains to lead him? — Then said Robin, I am a gentleman born, and that you would say God help you! if you could but see me; but at present it has so happened, that I have not one penny to help myself; because, I having been a valiant Cavalier for the King, and by the sad misfortunes of the late Civil Wars, am now utterly undone for ever, unless some sudden help speedily comes by Divine Providence. — I have kept a fast upwards of two days and two nights, and not so much as one poor morsel of bread has come within my hun-

gry body.—Alas ! good sir, said the beggar, I lament your case very much ; and if you will be pleased to accept of such homely chear as I have, you are heartily welcome to it ; and at the next alehouse we come to, I will give you some liquor of the best to drive it down ; whereupon the wallet was laid on the ground, and the victuals spread out on a green bank. I dare say there was no occasion to force Robin to eat ; but when he had filled his belly, away they both went to the place appointed, and there lay loving that night together.

The next day the beggar took him to his own house, where was the greatest plenty of very good cloaths, both woollen and linen, with which the beggar suited Robin.—He then shewed him an old chest, in which there was two hundred and fifty odd pounds, all in ready money. All this said the Beggar shall be your own when I die, if you will but stay with me all my life time. — Whereupon the Cocker replied, With hearty good-will, sir.—The bargain being thus made, Robin and his old master used to walk about to good mens houses, to see what victuals they

could get, till at last Robin became full as cunning as his old master, and was as well acquainted with the master beggars in Kent.

But to conclude, in process of time the old beggar died, and then his estate became Robin's, who (after he had nobly



interred his old master) went home to his former habitation, and gave orders for his bringing up his three children, which he begat in one night, and gave the two wenches ten pounds each for the injury he had done them, and threw the rest of the money into his wife's lap.

F I N I S.

